

REMARKS

Claims **1-66** are pending in the application.

Claims **1-66** stand rejected.

Claims **1, 4-21, 23, 25, 28-37, 50-51, 54** and **58** have been amended.

Claims **64-66** have been cancelled.

Formal Matters

The Abstract was objected to as exceeding the maximum permitted length. Applicants have amended the Abstract, and so believe this issue, as well as other issues raised by the Examiner, to be addressed.

Claim 54 was objected to because of an informality. Applicants have amended Claim 54 to correct the informality.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 1-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As an initial matter, Applicants have cancelled claims 64-66, and so respectfully submit that the above rejection is moot as to these claims.

Regarding independent claims 1, 19, 36 and 50, the Office Action states that:

“... For a claim to be statutory under 35 U.S.C. § 101 the following condition must be met: ... In the claim, the practical application of an algorithm or idea results in a useful, concrete, tangible result.” (Office Action, p. 3)

The Office Action continues:

“... According to the above guidelines, Applicant’s [sic] claims are limited to the manipulation of abstract ideas in the context of patentability because the claim lacks an indication of usefulness.” (Office Action, p. 4)

The Office Action appears to intend that similar arguments apply to the remaining independent and dependent claims. Applicants interpret the position taken by the Office Action to be that of the claims somehow lacking usefulness by virtue of the claims reciting only the manipulation of abstract ideas. Applicants, respectfully, do not agree with any of thee propositions.

Applicants respectfully submit that 35 U.S.C. § 101, relevant case law, nor the Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility of October 26, 2005, require anything not already provided by the claims, as filed. As correctly noted in the Office Action, established case law makes clear the requirement of a “useful, concrete and tangible result.” The applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-63 satisfy these requirements.

Regarding the need for a tangible result, the Interim Guidelines state:

The tangible requirement does not necessarily mean that a claim must either be tied to a particular machine or apparatus or must operate to change articles or materials to a different state or thing. However, the tangible requirement does require that the claim must recite more than a Sec. 101 judicial exception, in that the process claim must set forth a practical application of that Sec. 101 judicial exception to produce a real-world result. Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72, 175 USPQ at 76-77 (invention ineligible because had "no substantial practical application.").

"[A]n application of a law of nature or mathematical formula to a . . . process may well be deserving of patent protection." Diehr, 450 U.S. at 187, 209 USPQ at 8 (emphasis added); see also Corning, 56 U.S. (15 How.) at 268, 14 L.Ed. 683 ("It is for the discovery or invention of some practical method or means of producing a beneficial result or effect, that a patent is granted . . ."). In other words, the opposite meaning of "tangible" is "abstract."

The operations recited in claims 1, 19, 36 and 50 satisfy this requirement in that they, among other things, provide for the generation of a customer portal view, which in turn allows a user to invoke a workflow process by selecting a user-selectable option. In so doing, the invocation of the workflow process causes the workflow process invoke at least one of a plurality of business service methods, thereby causing a function associated with the selected option to be performed. Moreover, these operations are performed with specific structural requirements imposed on the software in use (the use of a user interface to allow a user to invoke a workflow process, and(in turn) a business service method, thereby causing a function associated with the selected option to be performed), a process that is significantly more structured and complex than simply allowing a user to select a function to perform. These operations do not provide an abstract result, but rather a tangible result, the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with the selected option.

Regarding the need for a concrete result, the Interim Guidelines state:

Another consideration is whether the invention produces a "concrete" result. Usually, this question arises when a result cannot be assured. In other words, the process must have a result that can be substantially repeatable or the process must substantially produce the same result again. *In re Swartz*, 232 F.3d 862, 864, 56 USPQ2d 1703, 1704 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (where asserted result produced by the claimed invention is "irreproducible" claim should be rejected under section 101). The opposite of "concrete" is unrepeatable or unpredictable. Resolving this question is dependent on the level of skill in the art. For example, if the claimed invention is for a process which requires a particular skill, to determine whether that process is substantially repeatable will necessarily require a determination of the level of skill of the ordinary artisan in that field. An appropriate rejection under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 101 should be accompanied by a lack of enablement rejection under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 112, paragraph 1, where the invention cannot operate as intended without undue experimentation. See infra.

The Office Action provides no rationale as to why any of claims 1-63 do not satisfy this requirement. Claims 1-63 recite operations that clearly produce a useful result (the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with the selected option), which is readily, substantially repeatable. The practical, real-world useful result sought in the Office Action is therefore clear: the performance of a function associated with the selected option, via the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so allow a user to process complex orders..

Applicants, however, have amended independent claims 1, 19, 36 and 50 to more clearly recite the relationships between the claimed elements that contribute to the aforementioned usefulness, as well as the useful, concrete, tangible results provided by the claimed invention. Thus, the amended independent claims now recite, for example, that the input received from the user comprises a selection of at least a selected option of the user-selectable options, and that at least one of the plurality of workflow processes is invoked in response to the selection of the at least one option of the plurality of user-selectable options. These and other amendments more clearly demonstrate the relationships between the elements in question, as well as the fact that the claimed invention does indeed provide a “useful, concrete and tangible result.”

Accordingly, the applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-63 satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C § 101.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As an initial matter, Applicants have cancelled claims 64-66, and so respectfully submit that the above rejection is moot as to these claims. As to claims 1-63, Applicants respectfully submit that, having demonstrated the utility of the claimed invention in responding to the rejection of claims 1-63 under 35 U.S.C § 101, Applicants have also demonstrated that the

Specification provides information sufficient to allow one of skill in the art to practice and use the claimed invention.

Claims 1-66 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

The Office Action posits the following:

“In that paper [the Specification filed December 17, 2001], applicant has stated the invention has the purpose of processing complex orders which include complex services and products, and this statement indicates that the invention is different from what is defined in the claim(s) because the independent claims do no include a limitation which indicates the processing of orders.” (Office Action, p4)

Applicants respectfully disagree. Each of the independent claims include language that clearly demonstrates that the invention claimed thereby is concerned with processing complex orders which include complex services and products. For example, claim 1 is directed to a “complex order processing system” (which is effected by the claim limitations). In claim 19, the claimed order processing system functions by managing and transforming complex objects representing at least one of services, orders and/or quotes. With regard to claim 36, an apparatus for processing orders is claimed, wherein business service methods are used to process orders for at least one of services, orders and/or quotes, which are represented by business objects. Finally,

claim 50 is directed to order processing functions by managing and transforming complex objects representing at least one of services, orders and/or quotes. As will be appreciated, in contrast to statements made in the Office Action, the independent claims, and so the dependent claims, are indeed directed to the processing of complex orders which include complex services and products.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over by Esposito, et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,587,838 B1 (Esposito), in view of Wiecha, U.S. Patent No. 5,870,717 (Wiecha) and Official Notice.

As an initial matter, Applicants have cancelled claims 64-66, and so respectfully submit that the above rejection is moot as to these claims.

While not conceding that the cited references qualify as prior art, but instead to expedite prosecution, Applicants have chosen to respectfully disagree and traverse the rejection as follows. Applicants reserve the right, for example, in a continuing application, to establish that the cited references, or other references cited now or hereafter, do not qualify as prior art as to an invention embodiment previously, currently, or subsequently claimed.

In order for a claim to be rendered invalid under 35 U.S.C. § 103, the subject matter of the claim as a whole would have to be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made. *See* 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). This requires: (1) the references must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations; (2) there must be some teaching, suggestion or motivation to combine references either in the references themselves or in the knowledge of the art; and (3)

there must be a reasonable expectation of success. *See MPEP 2143; MPEP 2143.03; In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1355-56 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 19, and 36 in the manner of claim 50, which now reads as follows:

50. A method for processing orders comprising:
generating a customer portal, wherein
the generating a customer portal comprises
a list of products and services associated with an account,
a list of quotes associated with the account,
a list of orders associated with the account, and
a plurality of user-selectable options, and
the customer portal is accessible by a user, wherein
the user is one of a customer service representative, a customer, and a
service provider for the customer;
invoking a workflow process, wherein
the workflow process invokes at least one business service method, and
the at least one business service method performs a function associated with the
selected option;
receiving at least one of:
a service profile,
quote information, and
order information pertaining to an account;
generating a business object, wherein
the generating is based on the at least one of
the service profile,
the quote information, and
the order information; and

transforming at least a portion of the business object into a complex object.

As also noted, Applicants respectfully note that independent claims 1, 19, and 36 have been amended to recite, among other limitations, substantially similar limitations to those presented above.

By contrast, Esposito is directed to a method and system for conducting real time electronic commerce, and describes:

“... a system for providing real-time notification of purchaser requirements in a heterogeneous network environment The heterogeneous network environment can include a public packet switched network, such as the Internet, and a wireless network, such as a plurality of pagers. Select embodiments include a plurality of wireless terminals in communication with the wireless network to receive real-time notification of a purchaser's requirements. At least one vendor computer is part of the system. The vendor computer has one or more databases for storing information about products and services in a product database, and a customer database, for storing information about customers. A plurality of client computers are part of the system. The client computers enable users to interact with the system to learn about and express interest in products and services.” (Esposito; Abstract)

By further contrast, Wiecha is directed to a system for ordering items over computer network using an electronic catalog, and describes an approach in which:

“Current corporate purchasing procedures are labor-intensive and therefore costly. The system enables an employee who needs an item which must be ordered from a supplier to select the item from an electronic catalog displayed on a personal computer and submit an order for approval and processing directly, by-passing both the normal paper approvals and the manual verification of the order by the organization's Purchasing department. It achieves this by means of an electronic catalog accessible from the employee's own personal computer, and a computer network and associated services linking the enterprise to one or more suppliers.” (Wiecha; Abstract)

As an initial matter, the Office Action states that, basically, the Abstract of Esposito teaches the claimed invention, save for construction of the software for processing complex customer inquiries and purchase orders. (Office Action, p. 5) No citation to Wiecha is made at all with regard to independent claims 1, 19, 36 and 50. With regard to the dependent claims, no citation whatsoever is made to Esposito or Wiecha. The Office Action merely picks a few of the claims, states that certain of such terminology such as that used in the claims is known (a point that Applicants do not concede), and then goes on to state that such are obvious as such terminology is known to users of systems from SAP, Baan and Oracle (once again, a point that Applicants do not concede).

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the particular parts of the cited references that they are relied upon in the Office Action have not been designated as nearly as practicable, and the pertinence of each reference has not been clearly explained, both as required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.104(c)(2). *See also* MPEP § 706.02(j). Moreover, the Office Action then proceeds to summarily take Official Notice of almost every limitation of the independent claims. Again, no mention is made of the references.

Moreover, the rejection is based upon a list of various items, some within the references and some which are not, that are loosely connected to various elements in Applicants' claims without further support. Further, the items recited in the references (such as they are) are generally unrelated to each other, resulting in inconsistency, and clearly have very little to do with Applicants' claims as recited. Applicant further objects to the Examiner's various assertions of "inherency" in various elements in the such inherencies are either false or otherwise insufficient to sustain the rejection. Nevertheless, Applicants have made every effort to respond to the rejections outlined in the Office Action.

However, the Office Action does correctly states that Esposito fails to teach the construction of the software for processing complex customer inquiries and purchase orders. (Office Action, p. 5) For example, nowhere in Esposito is there shown, taught or suggested the generation of a customer portal. Moreover, nowhere is there shown, taught or suggested the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option. This is the case because Esposito teaches a "...a system for providing real-time notification of purchaser requirements in a heterogeneous network environment" (Esposito, Abstract) Thus, Esposito is directed to conducting real time electronic commerce, and is not equipped to deal with complex order

processing, as in the claimed invention. Wiecha is directed to a system for ordering items over computer network using an electronic catalog. However, there is nothing taught by Wiecha that demonstrates anything more than simply a computer-based catalog system that allows a user to order items in the catalog electronically . This is just a system enables an employee who needs an item which must be ordered from a supplier to select the item from an electronic catalog displayed on a personal computer and submit an order for approval and processing directly, bypassing both the normal paper approvals and the manual verification of the order by the organization's Purchasing department.

By marked contrast, the claimed invention is directed, for example, to the processing of complex orders by the generation of a customer portal. Moreover, nowhere is there shown, taught or suggested the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option. Thus, neither Esposito nor Wiecha, taken alone or in permissible combination, shows, teaches or suggests (or has reason to do so) the use of the claimed invocations to address a user's need to perform certain functions in providing processing of complex orders.

In addition to the foregoing infirmities, this is because neither Esposito nor Wiecha have need nor recognition of technology such as that provided by the claimed invention. That neither reference teaches such technology thus comes as no surprise. In Esposito, the chosen approach is preferred in order to provide real-time notification of purchaser requirements in a heterogeneous network environment, and so the use of the claimed technology goes unrecognized and unappreciated. Given that the claimed processing of complex orders is achieved through the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option, such

functionality cannot be exercised over their design in systems employing the claimed invention. Wiecha fails to cure this infirmity of Esposito.

To wit, while Esposito may discuss a system which enables an employee who needs an item which must be ordered from a supplier to select the item from an electronic catalog displayed on a personal computer and submit an order for approval and processing directly, nothing is shown, taught or suggested with regard to the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option. This at least for the reason that Wiecha is concerned with avoiding the traditional use of paper documents and Purchasing department approval. Given that Wiecha has no need of the claimed technology in achieving this end, one of skill in the art would not look to Wiecha's disclosure for such teachings. In fact, given that Wiecha fails to demonstrate any sort of need for such technology, one would not expect one of skill in the art to look anywhere therefor. Thus, Wiecha provides neither a way to modify Esposito, nor does either reference demonstrate any sort of a need for such technology.

Thus, the Office Action does not establish the presence of these limitations in Esposito or Wiecha, taken alone or in permissible combination. As will be appreciated, the burden is of supporting a case of obviousness, lies with the Office, including whether the prior art references teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. *See MPEP 706.02(j).* For the reasons presented above, neither Esposito nor Wiecha, taken alone or in permissible combination, teach these limitations of claim 50, as well as the remaining independent claims.

In addition, Applicants also respectfully submit that the Office Action fails to satisfy the burden of factually supporting the alleged motivation to combine the two references. The duty of factually supporting the alleged motivation to combine may not be satisfied by engaging

impermissible hindsight; any conclusion of obviousness must be reached on the basis of facts gleaned from the references. Evidence must therefore be provided to suggest the combination, as “[b]road conclusory statements regarding the teaching of multiple references, standing alone, are not ‘evidence.’”, as will be appreciated. *See In re Dembicza*k, 50 U.S.P.Q.2d 1614, 1617 (Fed. Cir. 1999). The Office Action’s failure to meet this criteria is particularly evident with regard to the dependent claims, wherein neither reference is cited as teaching any recited limitation, nor is Official Notice taken thereof (which, Applicants maintain, would be inappropriate in any event)..

In this regard, Applicants respectfully submit that Esposito and Wiecha, taken alone or in permissible combination, cannot present a system in which the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option. Such technology is simply not shown, taught or suggested by either of these references. For the claimed invention, the ability to process complex orders in the manner discussed in the specification and recited in the claims, the combination of the use of Esposito and Wiecha, particularly given that such is achieved through the invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option.

This leads to the conclusion that not only do Esposito and Wiecha fail to show, teach or suggest such technology, but have no need to do so, because neither recognizes these benefits. Failing to appreciate these benefits, neither references addresses the obstacles that exist to creating solutions, nor providing any such solutions, such as those provided by the claimed invention. Lacking such appreciation and teachings, one of skill in the art could not find any motivation to combine their disclosures, because neither could be seen as lacking in this regard.

This, save for having the present disclosure to use as a blueprint, and so implying the use of hindsight, an obviously impermissible approach, which need not be dealt with here.

Further, the Office Action does not establish that such a combination of the teachings of these references would meet with success, as required. This comes as no surprise, as there is no way to combine these references to achieve the claimed invention, as demonstrated by the foregoing. Moreover, there is no teaching in the references, nor any extant in the skill in the art, which would provide the teachings necessary to successfully combine the disclosures of Esposito and Wiecha. Certainly, each of Esposito and Wiecha are directed to their own solution to their own problems, and are self-sufficient and self-contained solutions in that regard.

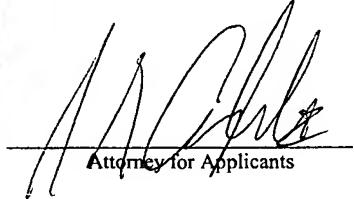
Were one of skill in the art to proceed regardless (a fruitless effort and one which Applicants to not concede in any event), the combination would still fail to teach the claimed invention, if only in regard to the claimed invocation of a workflow process and, subsequently, a business service method, and so the performance of a function associated with a selected option. At best, their combination would yield a system for ordering items over computer network using an electronic catalog, that would provide such services using real time electronic commerce. Thus, the claimed invention, by its recognition of the need for complex order processing, is in no way made obvious (nor anticipated) by Esposito and/or Wiecha, taken alone or in any permissible combination.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action fails to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness of amended independent claims 1, 19, 36 and 50, and all claims dependent upon them, and that they are in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejections of those claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5084.

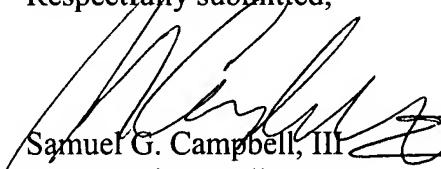
I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on August 10, 2007.



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8/10/07
Date of Signature

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